empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly from socially and economically marginalized groups.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an effort to universalize elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. The objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are as follows:

- All Children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2003
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010
- Universal retention by 2010

Education of girls is the primary focus under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It recognizes the need for special efforts to bring the out of school-girls especially from disadvantaged sections to schools. It also calls for involving women through participatory process in the effective management of schools. Some of the steps undertaken by the States under SSA are:-

(i) Setting up special models of Alternate Schools exclusively for girls.

(ii) Using Village Education Committees, Mother Teacher Associations and Women's Groups to follow up issues for girls' education.

(iii) Special efforts for improvement of access and enrolment, retention and achievement of girls.

Mechanism for GM Crop Trials

*276. SHRI ABANI ROY :

SHRI SATISH PRADHAN :

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "India needs mechanism to monitor GM crop trials", reported in the Times of India dated 22nd October,2001;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Government do not have any mechanism to check or monitor GM crops;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to adopt mechanism to monitor GM crop trials ?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) A three tier mechanism for monitoring research and granting approval for environmental release of Genetically Modified (GM) crops has been under implementation. Under the Rules, 1989 notified on 5th December, 1989 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 this regulatory mechanism for research and environmental release of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and products thereof has been established. The three tier system comprise Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBSC) at the Institute/Company; the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) a central committee serviced by the Department of Biotechnology for addressing the issues of biosafety while conducting the research work on GMOs; and the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), the statutory body to deal with all aspects of GMOs and products thereof in the Ministry of Environment and Forests. To monitor and evaluate the transgenic crops for their agronomic advantage and safety to the environment, a Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Committee (MEC) has been created under the RCGM to have on the spot monitoring of GM crops in the field trials. In addition, sixteen Site Visiting Teams were constituted by MEC drawing expertise of the country from various scientific agencies, Agricultural Universities including State Government Officials. There is a continuing inter-ministerial exercise to shorten the processing time and speed up the approvals.

Food Processing Industries in NER

*277. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of proposals received by Government from the North Eastern Region for setting up of food processing industries in these States during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of proposals cleared, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard ?